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Statement for The Southern Cross - State Aid

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STATEMENT FOR "THE SOUTHERN CROSS" BY THE PREMIER OF
SOUTH AUSTRALIA, THE HON. DON DUNSTAN, Q.C., M.P.
20.2.68.

PREMIER PROMISES AID IN 1969.

The Labor Party's promised grants of \$10 per capita for all children in non-Government schools and extended book allowances for children in secondary schools will be provided for in the 1968-69 Budget and will take effect in the 1969 school year if the present Government is returned to office on March 2nd.

This was stated to "The Southern Cross" this week by the Premier, Mr. Dunstan.

In presenting his Party's policy speech, Mr. Dunstan re-stated the Government's intention of making the per capita grant for children in non-Government schools and of extending the book allowance system in secondary schools by increases of \$2 per annum for 1st, 2nd and 3rd year students, \$4 per annum for 4th year students and \$10 for 5th year students.

Mr. Dunstan said that no Government had previously given in South Australia as much assistance to non-Government schools as they had been given under the Labor Government in the past three years. Indeed the free school book system had been a substantial help to parents with children in non-Government schools.

The Premier criticised his Liberal opponents on the question of aid to Independent schools.

"In addresses they have said that they will match the \$10 per capita grant at some unspecified time, they make no mention of school book allowances and at some time in the unspecified future when they think that the finances of the State are stable then they will pay \$20 per year for children in non-State secondary schools", Mr. Dunstan said.

"As Mr. Hall has informed the State that it will take at least three or four years before the finances of the State are in good shape, it would appear that the £20 grant for secondary school children is in the rather distant future, certainly beyond the life of the next Parliament," the Premier stated.

With respect to ancillary benefits, Mr. Dunstan pointed out that the Government had said that it would progressively provide maths. aids to all schools, Government and non-Government alike. This had not been matched by the Opposition which made no mention of such things. The Opposition had announced that it would provide the Schools General Medical Services to non-State schools.

"Apparently the Opposition is not aware of the present position", Mr. Dunstan said.

"Generally medical examinations are done in State schools by the Schools Health Services and are also done free in many non-Government schools in country areas. Requests are made to the Department and in recent years many Catholic and Lutheran and some Seventh Day Adventist Schools have had assistance in this way", Mr. Dunstan said.

Towns covered had included - Jamestown, Riverton, Eudunda, Port Pirie, Whyalla, Port Augusta, Mt. Gambier, Naracoorte, Millicent, towns in the Barossa Valley, Clare, Lobethal and Mt. Torrens.

Hearing tests had been conducted by the Services in metropolitan private schools upon request, and these had included major private schools in the metropolitan area and numerous Catholic schools.

The Deafness Guidance Clinic was available to any child in the State.

The Dental Services had been available to some private schools, but had not so far been used very extensively. However, the Premier said that Dental Services were developing with a current programme initiated by the Labor Government for the training of Dental Therapists and an extensive service to schools in South Australia would be commencing in 1969.

"It is clear that the Government had been steadily extending schools medical services and we are making its facilities available to private and Government schools", Mr. Dunstan said.

"At the moment regular examination in all schools in the State is not possible without the acquisition of considerable extra staff which the Director of Public Health advises is not available. However, the Government had been steadily getting extra assistance in this field and with increased staff would continue to do so so children in private schools could obtain the same services as those in Government schools."

In reply to a statement by the President of the Federation of Parents and Friends' Association of South Australian Catholic Schools published in last week's "Southern Cross", Mr. Dunstan said it was not true that the State faced any heavier financial burden in education because of the diminishing proportion of Catholic children attending Church

schools.

He said that the Government had a responsibility to its citizens to maintain an adequate public school system offering the highest possible standards of education to all those of its citizens who chose to use it. This must be its first priority.

"The Government has stated that it does not intend to reduce the amount available to the public school system in order to support a non-State school system", Mr. Dunstan said.

"However, we have also stated that we recognise the necessity of providing assistance for children in non-State schools in an endeavour to ensure that they are adequately educated."

"I have also made it clear in statements at Catholic School Speech Days in the presence of His Grace the Archbishop that when we can do more than we have already promised, we will do so."
